

CLAIMS

1-16. (canceled)

17. (previously presented) A deployable apparatus for creating a local reduction in wave height, the apparatus having a length dimension and a width dimension, the length dimension being greater than the width dimension and the apparatus being configured so that, in use, the length dimension is generally parallel to the predominant wave direction, the apparatus comprising:

at least one a buoyant or semi-buoyant upper surface member having an upper surface and a lower surface and being disposed in use at or near the water surface; and

an array of shaped drag inducing elements disposed adjacent the lower surface, wherein the drag inducing elements are collapsible or compressible when not in use.

18. (previously presented) An apparatus as claimed in claim 17, wherein the upper surface member comprises a plurality of flexibly linked buoyant or semi-buoyant sections.

19. (previously presented) An apparatus as claimed in claim 17, wherein the upper surface member comprises a single sheet of flexible buoyant or semi-buoyant material.

20. (previously presented) An apparatus as claimed in claim 17, further comprising a plurality of flexible fluid retaining structures disposed thereon.

21. (previously presented) An apparatus as claimed in claim 20, wherein the flexible fluid retaining structures comprise a network grid of pipes or tubes.

22. (previously presented) An apparatus as claimed in claim 20, wherein fluid is maintained in the flexible structures under pressure.

23. (previously presented) An apparatus as claimed in claim 20, further comprising at least one pump for supplying fluid to said flexible fluid retaining structures.

24. (previously presented) An apparatus as claimed in claim 22, wherein the fluid is water.

25. (previously presented) An apparatus as claimed in claim 17, wherein at least one of the drag inducing elements comprise shaped elements formed from a compressible material.

26. (previously presented) An apparatus as claimed in claim 17, wherein at least one of the drag inducing elements comprise collapsible drogue anchors.

27. (previously presented) An apparatus as claimed in claim 17, wherein at least one of the drag inducing elements are inflatable with an inflating fluid.

28. (previously presented) An apparatus as claimed in claim 27, wherein the inflating fluid is water.

29. (previously presented) A deployable apparatus for creating a local reduction in wave height, the apparatus having a length dimension and a width dimension, the length dimension being greater than the width dimension and the apparatus being configured so that, in use, the length dimension is generally parallel to the predominant wave direction, the apparatus comprising:

at least one a buoyant or semi-buoyant upper surface member having an upper surface and a lower surface and being disposed in use at or near the water surface; and

an array of shaped drag inducing elements disposed adjacent the lower surface, wherein the drag inducing elements are collapsible or compressible when not in use;

a plurality of flexible fluid retaining structures disposed thereon, wherein inflating fluid for the inflatable drag inducing elements is supplied from the flexible fluid retaining structures.

30. (previously presented) An apparatus as claimed in claim 29, wherein the leading end of the apparatus is inclined downwardly with respect to incident waves.

31. (previously presented) A system for deploying and recovering an apparatus for creating a local reduction in wave height comprising:

an apparatus as claimed in claim 17;

a deployment vessel;

a storage device on the vessel for the apparatus; and

means for paying out and recovering the apparatus.

32. (previously presented) A system as claimed in claim 31, wherein the storage device is a storage reel about which the apparatus is wound when not in use.

33. (new) An apparatus as claimed in claim 17, wherein the apparatus is designed for creating a local reduction in wave height when temporarily deployed in an offshore environment.

34. (new) An apparatus as claimed in claim 17, wherein the apparatus acts to reduce the wave

height by inducing viscous drag between the apparatus and the circulating water molecules as a wave travels along, beneath or around the apparatus.